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C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 000570

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ENRG](#) [EINV](#) [KNAR](#) [LH](#)  
SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER'S FAREWELL MEETING WITH  
AMBASSADOR

Classified By: Pol/Econ Officer Randolph Flay for reasons 1.4(b/d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Lithuania's Parliamentary Speaker Viktoras Muntianas, during the Ambassador's June 6 farewell call, expressed hope that a government coalition uniting Lithuania's political left and right will soon emerge. He declared his willingness to move Jewish property restitution forward and thanked the United States for its support of Lithuania's integration into NATO. Muntianas also expressed interest in seeing Lithuania in the Visa Waiver Program. The Ambassador commended the Parliament's support for the Global War on Terror and continued authorization of a Lithuanian presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, and he expressed appreciation for Parliament's support for matters of importance to the United States (and U.S. business), including the American International School. End summary.

12. (C) The Ambassador made a farewell call on Muntianas to review the highlights of the bilateral relationship in advance of the conclusion of his tour in Lithuania and departure from post. Muntianas assumed the Speaker's chair in April, when parliament removed former Speaker Arturas Paulauskas in a vote of no confidence. He attained the post by virtue of his membership in the Labor Party, the then-governing coalition's largest group, but left Labor and founded the breakaway Civil Democracy Party after a dispute with Labor leader Viktor Uspaskich.

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13. (C) The Ambassador congratulated Muntianas for Lithuania's democratic achievements and steadfast support for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Ambassador reiterated his standing offer to brief Seimas members about alliance operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

JEWISH ISSUES

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14. (C) The Ambassador told Muntianas that Lithuania has an opportunity to earn international recognition for coming to terms with its Holocaust legacy. He commended efforts to research Jewish communal property claims and draft necessary authorizing legislation and said he hopes the amendment to the law on property restitution finds broad parliamentary support in the coming months. The Ambassador noted that delaying the restitution process may affect international support for Lithuania in the long run.

15. (SBU) The Ambassador also raised with the Speaker concerns about plans to develop the Old Jewish Cemetery in the Snipiskes district of Vilnius. He acknowledged the complexity of the competing claims of stakeholders, and said that protection of Lithuania's historic and cultural legacy may require legislative intervention. The Speaker said that public action in this sphere is a very important sign of

democracy, and hoped there would be some positive developments in both areas soon.

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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¶6. (U) The Ambassador thanked the Speaker for the parliament's assistance in clarifying the tax status of the American International School in Vilnius. The Speaker's advisor said the school helped Lithuania to attract foreign investment and reputable foreign companies.

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